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ABSTRACT

The current lifelong learning movement, the new force toward global education, owes much to the League of Nations and the United Nations that sponsored an expanded multiracial "polis." Its philosophical foundations go back, however, to ancient China, India, and especially Greece, where philosophers and scientists got their creative stimulus from the environment of the polis. In Greece the ideals of lifelong learning were first fully expressed in the concept of paideia, an educational effort pursued beyond the years of schooling and lasting throughout life. The first signs of lifelong learning were Homer's paideia that was strengthened during the following centuries with the teachings of the pre-Socratic philosophers, writers, and poets--from Hesiod and Heraclitus to Theognis and Pindar. The concept was further enhanced by prudent policies and legislation (i.e., Solon, Chilon, and Periander) as well as the teachings of the sophists and philosophers within an atmosphere of freedom. Lifelong learning as an expression of paideia then reached its peak during the classical period (fifth to fourth century B.C.) and turned Greece into the paideusis of the world. Factors that enhanced the growth of paideia were freedom of speech, freedom from poverty, and freedom from governmental mismanagement. The lack or loss of such factors impeded its functioning. (YLB)

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THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF LIFELONG LEARNING

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Introduction

Although Lifelong Learning is to many a modern day idea, its philosophical foundations go back to ancient China, India, and Greece. It was in Greece, however, that its ideals were first fully expressed in the concept of paideia, which would extend beyond the years of schooling and would last throughout the whole life (Marrou, 1964). While paideia first appears in Homer, its full crystallization takes place during the classical period under the influence of such giants of thought as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The knowledge, then, of the factors that contributed to its flourishing in ancient times could assist us today in our efforts to become a learning society.

As previously stated, the first signs of lifelong learning can be traced to Homer's paideia which is strengthened during the following centuries with the teachings of the pre-Socratic philosophers, writers, and poets -- from Hesiod and Heraclitus to Theognis and Pindar. Further, enhanced by prudent policies and legislation (Solon, Chilon, Periander, etc.) as well as the teachings of the sophists and philosophers within an atmosphere of freedom, lifelong learning as an expression of paideia would reach its all-time peak during the classical period (5th-4th ce. B.C.), turning Greece into the paideusis of the world.

Purpose and Method of Study

Since lifelong learning is emerging as the new master concept in education the study of an ancient antecedent seemed quite in order. Moreover, this researcher considered that an in-depth examination of

the philosophical underpinnings of the concept in ancient times would be of great value to us in guiding and shaping our current efforts towards a learning society.

To gain a holistic view of the subject, the presently reported study went through the following series of steps: a. a brief overview of past and current conceptualizations of lifelong learning, b. an in-depth analysis of the philosophical groundings of the concept in ancient Greece, c. an examination of the various factors that contributed to its emergence and decline, and d. implications derived from the inquiry. Since the present inquiry will focus its examination on the philosophical groundings of the concept (step b), the other steps will be discussed briefly and only in a manner that will enhance the understanding of the subject. (For an elaborate discussion of the other parts, the reader is referred to research carried out by this writer and Dr. Boucouvalas appearing in the references.)

A careful examination revealed a host of positive factors that were pivotal to the emergence and flourishing of the concept, but it also revealed other negative factors which led to its decline. The remainder of this inquiry essentially follows the above format.

Past and Current Conceptualizations of Lifelong Learning

The current lifelong learning movement is the child of the latter part of our century. While the two world wars brought a heavy blow to world education, in a different way they became the catalysts for its reshaping and expansion, as well as for the emergence of life-long learning as the new force towards global education. Thus the life-

long learning movement owes a great deal to the two peaceful offspring of the two great wars, i.e. the League of Nations (1920) and the United Nations (1945).

Another league in ancient times, i.e. the Delian League (478 B.C.), an offspring of the Persian Wars, would become the catalyst for the full flourishing of paideia during the classical period. And as Athens, the prime victor of the Persian Wars, became the founder of the Delian League and the educator of the ancient world, similarly the United States, the principal victor of the two world wars, was instrumental in the establishment of the two modern leagues and became the major educator of our world.

The lifelong learning movement has then passed through various stages and phases to reach its current level of concrete conceptualizations and maturity. To attain this advanced stage, however, it has utilized the talents of many philosophers, researchers and writers of our time. One of them is Dave (1973), a leading authority in the area of conceptualization and definition of the movement and its key characteristics. Dave's great contribution, however, would be quite incomplete, if a number of other writers had not laid the groundwork for his research. Thus authors like Mumford (1956), McGhee (1959), Thomas (1961), and Hutchins (1968), greatly contributed in establishing the broader framework of the lifelong learning movement, which encompasses the key concepts of lifelong learning, lifelong education, and learning society.

Thus, just as in ancient Greece the philosophers and scientists would get their creative stimulus from the environment of the polis, similarly our researchers today are stimulated by our greatly expanded polis. Indeed, it was the sponsorship of this tremendously expanded

multiracial "polis," i.e. the United Nations, that provided the crucial thrust to our lifelong learning movement. The publication of Learning to Be (1972) by the UNESCO-appointed worldwide Commission on the Development of Education and the UNESCO Conference in Nairobi (1976) were the two main forces that catapulted lifelong learning to the forefront of educational planning and perceived it as the best vehicle to global literacy and transformation of our post-industrial society into a learning society.

The Philosophical Foundations of Lifelong Learning: An Ancient Antecedent

Philosophy and pedagogy were the mature flowers of the classical Greek thought. Having solved the problems of daily existence through agriculture, conquests and commerce during the previous centuries, the Greek mind had now all the prerequisites to delve into the inquiry of the eternal philosophical problems and make paideia its chief preoccupation.

But what is actually meant by paideia? Paideia is such a complex concept that when one talks about it "it is impossible to avoid bringing in modern expressions like civilization, culture, tradition, literature, or education. But none of them really covers what the Greeks meant by paideia. Each one of them is confined to one aspect of it: they cannot take in the same field as the Greek concept unless we employ them all together." (Jaeger, 1945, p. vi). The richness of paideia, then, encompasses both education and culture at the same time.

While its original meaning was limited in scope, expressing the

warlike arete of the Homeric period or the rewarding fruits of peaceful life in Hesiod's time and the results of schooling in the pre-classical era, in the maximalist perspective of the classical period and thereafter paideia became coterminous with lifelong learning denoting the "educational effort, pursued beyond the years of schooling and lasting throughout the whole of life" (Marrou, 1964, p. 142).

Thus Homer with his references to Achilles's paideia next to Centaur Chiron (Kevane, 1970) and his famous "αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν" (Iliad, 1963) would become the first Greek pedagogue, to be followed by Hesiod (7th ce.) who sings the fruits of peaceful country life. This early body of paideia is steadily enlarged with the work of the many pre-Socratic poets, philosophers and writers. Thus while Tyrtaeus further expands Homer's warlike paideia, Theognis and Pindar (6th ce.), following Hesiod's path, will praise the ideals of the Greek culture that will later become part of the spiritual heritage of Greece.

In a similar vein, most of the seven wise men of ancient Greece would not only praise the eternal value of paideia, i.e. Solon, Periander, Pittacus, etc., but would also actively support it whenever they were in power. Thus Solon (c. 640-c. 560 B.C.) and Periander (c. 625-585 B.C.), when they wielded their power over Athens and Corinth did not only praise but also strongly supported the paideia of their poleis, turning them into centers of the Muses. Their deep love and concern for paideia is further attested to by the great number of maxims (over 40) that these wise men and the Presocratic philosophers left behind us (Kehayopoulos, 1981). A few examples, i.e. "I grow old always learning more" (Γηράσκω ἀεὶ πολλὰ διδασκόμενος - Solon), "Study everything" (Μελέτα τὸ πᾶν - Periander), "It is difficult to know thyself" (Χαλεπὸν ἑαυτὸν γνῶναι -

Thales), "Learning changes the human being" ('Η διδαχή μεταρυσμοῖ τόν ἄνθρωπον - Democritus), are sufficient evidence to our lifelong learners that questions occupying their mind today had also been the concern of their ancient forefathers.

Thus the rich body of paideia expressed by these and many other philosophers and poets during the pre-classical period would become the intellectual leaven for the growth of the Greek civilization during the following centuries. This leaven would expand further and fill the Greek world from Marseilles to North Africa and the Black Sea, becoming its common binding force (Marrou, 1964). Its enrichment during the classical period would give rise to an unprecedented level of culture that would create the first learning society (Mumford, 1956; Kitto, 1976), which is manifested in the works of the many giants of the arts and sciences of that period.

The miracle, then, of the classical period has its foundations in the tremendous outburst of intellectual activity characterizing Greece and especially its periphery, i.e. Ionia and Magna Grecia, during the preceding decades. The fermentation of a great number of ideas about man, his cosmos, and his gods, that will find their final refinement and crystallization during the classical period (see Table 1), will originate here. Thus ideas such as the one of the "ideal state" expressed in the Republic or of the one god (Socrates, Plato, etc.), have their precursors in Hippodamus's and Phaleas's ideal states[1] or Anaxagoras's idea of nous as universal god.[2] Even such far-reaching ideas as reincarnation and life after death expressed in Symposium and elsewhere[3] are encountered in Presocratic philosophers and scientists, as Empedocles, for example, who talks about his past reincarnations.[4]

TABLE 1

FROM LIMITED LEARNING TO LIFELONG LEARNING

HOMER ± 800 B.C.	PRESOCRATICS ± 500 B.C.	SOCRATES & POST-SOCRATICS AFTER 400 B.C. →
	GOD(S)	LIFELONG LEARNING INDICATORS
12 major gods (Gods anthropomorphic and close to man; good and bad) (Ajax curses gods - Iliad)	6 major gods (Gods questioned, remote and above man) (I don't know if there are any gods. - Protagoras)	1 God (God is One, benevolent and far above man) (Socrates believes in gods we don't believe in - Apology)
	MAN	
Man more bad than good (Iliad) ἄνθρωπος κακός ἤ καλός	Man bad and good (Sophists) ἄνθρωπος κακός καί καλός	Nobody errs knowingly (Socrates) ἄνθρωπος καλός καί ἀγαθός (καλοκάγαθος)
Hell is...hell (Odysseus)	Hell could be good or bad (Sophists)	Hell may be...Paradise (Socrates, Plato)
Man afraid of death and life after death	Man skeptical about death and life after death	Man accepts death and believes in after-life
Agriculture	Arts and crafts	Manufacturing
Village	Polis	Metropolis
Peasant	Polites	Cosmo-polites
Limited Travel	Extensive Travel	World Travel
(Compare, for example, Homer's "Odyssey" with Clark's "2001: A Space Odyssey")		
Human learning limited	Human learning expanded	Human learning at its peak
Learning limited to few years (Homer)	Learning expanded to many years (Presocratics and Sophists)	Learning is a lifelong engagement (Socrates, Plato, etc.) Learning continues after life (Plato, Socrates)
Leisure time limited	Leisure time expanded	Leisure time further expanded
Civil Rights limited (Dracon's and Lycurgus's Laws)	Civil Rights greatly expanded (Solon's and Pisistratus's Laws)	Civil Rights guaranteed (Periclean Age Laws)
	...and ARETÉ	
Αἰέν 'Αριστεύειν (Homer)	Πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ὁ ἄνθρωπος (Protagoras)	Πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ὁ θεός (Socrates)
Love thy Friend and kill thine Enemy (Homer, Sophists)		Love thy Friend and spare thine Enemy (Socrates)
Man more Flesh and less Spirit	Man Flesh and Spirit	Man more Spirit and less Flesh
WAR (Epic)	WAR AND PEACE (Tragedy)	Search for ETERNAL PEACE (Philosophy, Metaphysics)

(Existence of more learning opportunities today (formal and informal, leisure, travel, etc.) but not same level of lifelong learning, is explained as a difference in the mix of "ingredients," i.e. mundane needs (earn a living, worldly success) versus spiritual needs (reach arete and save the world...)

Similarly, Socrates's famous "I know nothing" and "better suffer than inflict injustice" or Isocrates's criticism of beauty and wealth, can find their precursors in Democritus's and others' maxims. Finally, the often quoted classical myth of arete and kakia was the work of another Presocratic: Prodicus of Ceos. Thus, while lifelong learning will reach its peak during the classical era, it has a long prehistory. This prehistory is aptly portrayed in many, outwardly unrelated but inwardly akin, maxims such as Homer's "strive always for the best," Heraclitus's "war is father of all things," Hesiod's "shame is to be idle," or "paideia is a refuge to all human beings."

This positive attitude towards lifelong learning is further attested by the great number of itinerant philosophers frequenting the centers of the Greek world or even by the exorbitant tuitions that students were willing to pay to a famous philosopher or sophist.[5] The importance attached to learning in classical Athens in particular, is evidenced in the obligation of the parents to send their children to school (Freeman, 1969), otherwise the law did not hold them liable to take care of their parents in their old age, or in the law requiring the metics to pass a literacy test before getting their residence permit. Measures like this or like the visionary bill of "theorikon,"[6] reflect the philosophy of the state towards lifelong learning and explain the almost universal literacy prevailing in Athens at that time.[7] The importance of such learning can be also seen in Plato's and Aristotle's students, almost all of them adults, as well as in Plato's Republic, where both the philosopher-king and his subjects are continuously trained and learning. Such continuous training was also characterizing the state of Sparta, but the emphasis there was on physical rather than

intellectual training. The Athenians, concentrating on the latter, would become the first learning society with such prominent examples as Sophocles and Isocrates, who continued writing and teaching long in their eighties![8]

Thus paideia was at the forefront of the polis's activities and for the best of men it was "the highest of all ideal values" (πρῶτον τῶν καλλίστων). As previously stated, however, its final crystallization would take place during and especially after the Socratic era. From the long list of philosophers, sophists and poets that served paideia during the Socratic period, we should mention here Protagoras, Gorgias and Hippias, that great trio of sophists that revolutionized the thinking of their time and advocated the utilitarian aspects of paideia. The great tragic trio, on the other hand, tried to bring a balance to the previous movement by expressing its humanitarian aspects. Thus Protagoras's skepticism and cynic realism (Hussey, 1972) about gods and men, i.e. "man is the measure of all things" (πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ὁ ἄνθρωπος), will be tempered by the Sophoclean and Aeschylean idealism and belief in humanistic paideia, which is a lifelong process, i.e. "learning is good even to an old person" (καλόν δέ καί γέροντα μανθάνειν σοφά - Aeschylus). Since the number of these "paideia-makers" during the classical period is quite large, we will confine our discussion to its prime shapers, i.e. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, and Xenophon.

Socrates is the first to become fully immersed into the examination of such questions as "what is truth" or "what is virtue" and pronounce his famous "ἕν οἶδα ὅτι οὐδέν οἶδα" (I know one thing, that I know nothing). To Socrates, education is not the cultivation of certain

abilities; to him "the real essence of education is that it enables men to reach the true aim of their lives" (Jaeger, 1943, p. 69). This effort cannot be restricted to the few years of higher education. "Either it takes a whole lifetime to reach its aim, or its aim can never be reached" (ibid.). In his Apology (24d) he will note that his search for truth and attainment of paideia is a lifelong one and, therefore, he would continue, even at the fear of a death penalty, to question his fellow-citizens and learn through his proverbial dialogues the meaning of "kalon" and "agathon," of truth and phronesis.

In this sense, for Socrates, man was born for paideia, since it is his only real possession. Thus through him "the concept and the meaning of paideia took on a broader and deeper spiritual significance and that its value for man was raised to the highest point" (Jaeger, 1943, p. 70). This gadfly of Athens, then, becomes the personification of the lifelong learner, who considers that 70 years of learning are not enough for an individual's growth (Plato, 1952). Thus, through his own example, Socrates contributed immensely to the growth of paideia and became the catalyst for the self-actualization of scores of brilliant minds of this period, the most notable among which is Plato.

Plato is not only the greatest of the Greek philosophers, but also the prime educator of Greece. His monumental work on paideia, expressed primarily in his Laws and also in the Republic, remains to this day unsurpassed. With him the word paideia is amplified and crystallized, reaching its current meaning. Plato will see its need as ranging from birth to death, since paideia for him is "the moulding of the soul," and "a lifelong task which everyone should undertake to the limit of his strength" (Laws, I, 644).

So Plato, in his Republic, perceives the ideal state as the ideal paideia fulfilled. Since the eudemonia of the state depends on its paideia, then the most important mission for paideia would be to create a favorable environment in which it can be carried on. In this context, perhaps the best description of the power and importance of paideia for the human being is to be found in his unparalleled parable of the Cave, appearing in his Republic (Plato, 1952). Plato contributed as nobody else to the cause of lifelong learning, both through his ideas and the establishment of his famous Academy, that became the world lighthouse of paideia for the next thousand years, that is till 529 A.D.

Socrates' shocking end, together with the catastrophic effects of the Peloponnesian War, would leave an indelible mark on the perception of paideia both to Plato and his contemporary Isocrates. But while for Plato and his teacher paideia had an "ethical doctrine and transcendental implications," for Isocrates paideia was something more tangible. Isocrates in Antidosis, his main work on paideia, will strongly disagree with Plato on the applicability of his lofty ideas on paideia and the duty of the state to educate its citizens. However, he will join him in his attack against the contemporary demagogues and mob rule of Athens. Plato, in his turn, will praise his speech-writing gifts and will note that "the elements in his character make a nobler combination" (Phaedrus, 279).

Aristotle, Plato's student par excellence, brings about the final crystallization on paideia. Reflecting the evolving scientific spirit of his time, Aristotle struck a fine balance between the Platonic and Isocratic notions on paideia, being fully aware of the distance

between real and ideal. Alexander the Great was not the first to recognize his teacher's influence upon him, stating his famous "I owe my life to my father, but the meaning of life to my teacher." In a similar fashion, Aristotle will exert a profound influence upon the educators and philosophers of his time and thereafter, through the plethora of his writings and the founding of his Peripatetic School. Moreover, with his statements that learning is a characteristic not of philosophers in particular but of every human being and that "all men by nature desire knowledge" ("ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγεται" - Metaphysics, I, 1) Aristotle stands out as one of the strongest supporters of lifelong learning.

Xenophon, in contrast to his teacher Socrates, will travel extensively and his first-hand knowledge of both the Persian and Spartan systems will exert a strong influence on him. Thus Xenophon will praise the Persian paideia, but he will also admit that it is confined only to an elite while in Greece and especially in Sparta it is a possession of all the citizens. His successful military experience will make him pronounce that soldiering is "the best education for a truly noble man" (Jaeger, 1944, p. 163). Moreover, his predilection for "law and order" and his disillusionment with his native Athens will bring him closer to Sparta and its educational system, in which he finds many merits, especially in the state-supported education, the eugenic breeding, and the lifelong education through state supervision. Still Xenophon will live to witness the resounding Spartan defeat at Leuctra (360 B.C.), which showed the hidden weaknesses of that authoritarian, militaristic system.

Finally, in his comparative study on the subject of paideia, Kuang Hung will remark that the two major differences between the ancient Greek

and ancient Chinese system were: a. the fact that paideia in ancient China was the "privilege of nobility," while in Greece it was widespread even from the time of the Persian wars, and b. that while democracy in Greece required and encouraged education and participation of the citizens in the government of the polis, the Chinese despotism discouraged learning and involvement in politics (Hung, 1972, p. 85).

The Rise and Fall of Paideia

As previously discussed paideia took a long time to reach its full bloom during Pericles' Golden Age, which turned Athens into the paideusis of Greece (Thucydides, 1963, II, 41) and Greece, through Alexander's conquests, into the paideusis of the world (Starr, 1980, p. 169). Paideia flourished in Greece and especially in Athens because of the fertile ground it found there. A careful examination of its growth shows that a beneficial configuration of factors was responsible for that. First and foremost was the climate of freedom that prevailed from early times in the Greek world. This freedom reached its climax in Athens after the Persian Wars, when a number of political and administrative changes broadened and deepened the democratization process that had started there at the turn of the 6th century. The basis for this change, however, is to be found in the monumental work of Solon and Pisistratos, whose administrative and legal reforms (Seisachthia, etc.) unleashed the creative powers of the Athenians. Within a century the tremendous energy generated from this environment of freedom, free inquiry, general education, and good administration, would propel Athens to a higher plane, where it would become the unquestionable educational,

cultural and economic leader of its time. The formation of the Delian League (478 B.C.) would serve as the catalyst that would transform the polis of Athens into the Empire of Athens. The phenomenal growth of Athens, however, would bring in a way its fall, because "its adventurous spirit /would not only/ force an entry into every sea and into every land" (Thucydides II, 41), but would also clad Athens with a hybristic attitude towards its friends and foes alike. This hybris would contribute to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.) and is clearly expressed in such incidents as the treatment of the Melians (416 B.C.) and the Sicilian Expedition (415-413 B.C.). The tremendous stress of that war would adversely affect both the polis and its people, who would fine Pericles, force Thucydides to self-exile, and sentence Socrates to death.

This tragic peripeteia of the Athenian Republic is perhaps the best depiction of the strengths and weaknesses of a democratic system. As long as citizens and leaders utilize the system for the common good, the system works and flourishes, but when they use it for personal gain or self-aggrandizement, then, it sooner or later collapses. The substantial weakening of the naval and economic power of Athens after the War would be later marked by a decline in its educational and cultural power. The rise of the Macedonian star a little later would further weaken the Athenian economic and cultural supremacy, as new centers of commerce and knowledge, i.e. Alexandria, Antioch, etc., would now emerge in the vast empire of Alexander. Their emergence would put an additional stress on the intellectual resources of the mainland (Plutarch, 1976) and in time these centers would become a brain drain and source of competition to the mainland centers, such as Athens. Finally, Greece's

fall to Rome (146 B.C.) would not only diminish the Greeks' creative force but would also spread their already stressed intellectual resources thinner as they would now become the teachers of the expanded Roman Empire.

Conclusions and Implications

It becomes apparent, then, that certain factors enhance while others impede the growth of paideia. Among the first we could include freedom of speech, freedom from poverty, and freedom from government mismanagement. These freedoms could become the foundations on which paideia can grow and thrive. Good luck and charismatic leadership could be an additional bonus. Athens, for example, was blessed with the discovery of the rich silver mines in Lavrion just a few years before the Persian Wars which financed the formidable Athenian navy during that period (Starr, 1980) and such charismatic leaders as Miltiades, Themistocles and above all Pericles.

The lack or loss of such factors can only impede the smooth functioning of a state and its paideia. It seems, then, that the real problem of such a state is to maintain a fine balance between these factors. Deterioration in any of them or excesses from leaders or citizens can only harm a state and its institutions. What we could, then, learn today is that paideia and freedom need a constant vigilance; they require civic self-sacrifice and wise leaders, not "wise-guys." Then the pivotal role of the citizens in the attainment of such goals is self-evident: they should be sensitive and sensible enough to distinguish a democratic from a demagogic leader, they should put the common weal above their personal profit, and should strive always for the best, or "αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν," as Homer had long ago proclaimed.

Footnotes

[1]For more information on this subject the reader is referred to Jaeger, II, 201 and De Vogel, I, 112.

[2]For more details, see De Vogel, I, 65-70 and Hussey, 138-141.

[3]The most astounding report of life after death and reincarnation is probably Plato's reference to the incident of Er (Republic X, 614a-621d).

[4]In his past lives Empedocles says he was a boy, a girl, a bush, a bird and a "dumb fish." (De Vogel, I, 64).

[5]Gorgias and Protagoras are quite "famous" for exacting high tuition, but are not the exception. Plato, with Socrates as his mouthpiece, attacks on several occasions (Protagoras, Gorgias, Apology, etc.) the great interest of the Sophists to sell skills rather than teach aretē.

[6]The "Theorikon" is perhaps the best example of the love and importance Athens placed on paideia. Essentially, it was a special state fund earmarked to cover attendance fees to the theater for poor people.

[7]For an exhaustive treatment of this subject see Burns's article on Athenian Literacy, Aristophanes's Knights (188-89) and also Freeman, pp. 282ff.

[8]Sophocles, for example, wrote Oedipus at Colonus when he was almost 90, while Isocrates completed his Panathenaicus when he was 97!

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